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* 556 A man may receive so many prerogatives with regard to house
425 painting that he has to continue the designs on the sides of his
[606] dwelling, or he may receive so many figures for a totem-pole
[532] that he can erect one of composite pattern. X may acquire prerogatives not only from his father-in-law, but from his mother-in-law, and if he is the husband of several wives, the family of each may contribute something. If, for some inexplicable reason, X is not given any prerogative from the family of his wife, he uses one of his own ancestral myths with the names belonging thereto. A man who gives many potlatches can choose to validate numerous family names for himself, or to concentrate on one alone, elevating it to a position of great importance. But any names he validates must belong to his
[685] family; it is contrary to custom for a Bella Coola to steal a name to which he has no right.

*556 At this, or some other suitable time, X prays for assistance
782 in the complicated rites that are to follow. Taking four pieces of pounded and dyed cedar-bark, and four pieces of undyed bark, he places on each a small quantity of food and throws the eight into the fire. Likewise he may throw in four small pieces of any kind of goods. As he does so he appeals to the supreme god:

"Please strengthen my spirit for the many duties which are before me."

[756] Instead of praying himself, X may ask a shaman to do so for him, in the belief that the latter's supplication will be more efficacious.

* 556 The necessity for supernatural assistance lies in the fact
●688 that any serious error or disaster in the performance of potlatch
628 rites calls for summary punishment, since X has allowed ceremonial *nsaok* knowledge to reach the uninitiated. In such a case the duty of meting out a penalty falls upon the members of a foreign tribe. Nothing is said at the time, but the departing guests take away with them information of what has happened. Great latitude is allowed as to who shall be the chastisers. The guests may be related to X and the members

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of his village, hence they will not feel it incumbent upon them to intervene. But news travels, and in course of time the *sisaok* members of some other tribe will decide to send a raiding party against X's village. All informants agreed most emphatically that this custom prevailed among the coast people from the Tsimshian country to Alert Bay, but specific examples could not be obtained. The Bella Coola regard such a raid as the proper course to pursue, and belligerent tribes may have used an irregularity in the potlatch rites as an excuse for an assault. It is clear, however, that this custom never attained such prominence that it could be called a law.

The following is an instance of the Bella Coola outlook on the question:

The father of an informant had had such success in giving potlatches that his neighbours were jealous. On one occasion he prepared a representation of a whale, an elaborate wooden frame, fifteen feet long, operated by men concealed within and carrying passengers; this was a figure which entered into his ancestral myth. One of the carpenters who made it, bribed by a jealous rival of the donor of the potlatch, arranged that the lower jaw of the whale should fall to the floor during the proceedings. This revealed the mechanism of the structure. White influence on the coast prevented an incursion of foreign raiders, but according to this informant, the chiefs determined that his father should die, and they employed a sorcerer for this purpose. His father and eleven other relatives died soon afterwards. This man, the sole survivor, ascribes his escape to his adoption of Christianity.

Another instance of the penalty which follows errors in potlatch ritual occurred a few years ago, when a number of young men used the cone-shaped whistles openly, as if they had been toys. The presence of the white man prevented any open steps towards punishment, but before long all the youths died. No one knows what caused their deaths, though probably they were due to an expert in black magic acting on the instructions of a senior *sisaok*.

After the prayer, X and his family give more food to their guests, whose boxes containing what they are to carry away are increasing in number. By his lavishness, X increases his prestige in the eyes of his fellow-villagers.

If he can afford to build a new house embodying the form

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a man, *ux·wnaisa*, with the prerogative of enforcing obedience to river taboos. Ever since, the owner of this name, when it has been duly legalized, has had the right to perform this function. In some cases, such as carpenters and singers, the validation of a prerogative has not brought with it the necessary ability, so that the incumbent remains a properly ratified, but non-functioning, craftsman. No mechanical skill is required by a River Guardian, hence the owner of the name *ux·wnaisa* has always been able to perform his duties.

From time immemorial certain restrictions have been enforced concerning the river: No refuse may be thrown in, otherwise the olachen would remain in the ocean. For the same reason, women at certain periods are not allowed to bathe lest a speck of blood should blind the fish and prevent them from seeing the route. Occasionally an olachen with red eyes is caught; this is caused by some heedless woman. When the fish are running in the river, women are not allowed on the bank, nor to repair the nets. At high tide, it is forbidden to drive stakes for olachen nets.

The number of prohibitions increases during the critical period of the salmon run. Then no freshly hewn planks can be set afloat, and even a canoe which has just been completed must be kept for ten days before launching. No one whose husband or wife has died within the last year can embark at the village, but must proceed to a landing-place at the head of the fiord. Most important of all, refuse of salmon must be deposited in the woods; if thrown into the river, the fish would smell it and avoid the stream. Even accidents such as the upsetting of a canoe, or the spilling of olachen grease, are considered to be offences.

Disregard of any of these injunctions is displeasing to the salmon and it is the duty of the River Guardian to punish the offender, irrespective of his rank. In case of slight infringements, he beats the guilty person or throws him into the river. The guilty person usually scrambles out, but should he be swept away and drowned, no recompense can be claimed by

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688 his relatives. This punishment is customary in cases of the
693 upsetting of a canoe. Death is the penalty for throwing refuse
[177] into the river, particularly during the summer, and until the coming of the white man the River Guardian exacted it without hesitation.

THE PROFESSION OF UTTERING A DRONING CRY

424 At the appearance of masked figures representing super-
551 natural beings, whether in *nusuk* or *kusiut* dances, many of the
[575] women repeatedly utter a peculiar, high-pitched, droning cry
[463] which adds considerably to the weirdness and impressiveness
[431] of the occasion. Ability to do this depends on an ancestral
[773] prerogative duly confirmed by the distribution of presents. Many ancestral myths describe how some of the first women were given by *Alquntăm*, or acquired in other ways, the right to drone, and mention is made of the name used by each with respect to this prerogative. Unlike the one previously described, many of the first women possessed this privilege, which is accordingly common at the present time. A name
[553] of this type is usually confirmed in girlhood, sometimes even in infancy, and being of relatively slight importance may be validated at a ceremony of less dignity than a potlatch. One of these names is *Nunuqwelelslaiyu·a*, which has reference to
[773] the blue-green sheen of some abalone-shell brought from the east by Raven in the beginning of time, as described in the ancestral myth in which this name is included. For many
[178] years there has been considerable laxity with regard to this prerogative, and women lacking it have even been urged to drone in order to add to the solemnity of the occasion and to increase the wonder of the uninitiated.

424 There is another similar prerogative, enabling the incum-
767 bent to drone at mourning ceremonies. In the beginning of
463 time, *Smeoan* of Kimsquit married *Tlăkwaitl*, the daughter of
793 a Bella Bella chief, who had this right. It has since been transmitted from one of her descendants to another at Kimsquit.

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quit. Details of this prerogative were not obtainable, but it seems to follow the general type.

THE PROFESSION OF FIRST BERRY PICKER

All women can pick berries, but in every village there is at least one who has the prerogative of picking the first of every kind. The origin of this right is lost in dim antiquity, but, like all others, each first berry picker has a special professional name embodied in her ancestral myth which must be duly validated before she can function. One of these is *Stlxwarwaxsimâx-a*, another is *Ła'yo*. Though normally reserved for women, one of these names is occasionally given to a male child, in which case it is said to have been hermaphroditized. No one would dare to pick berries until the legal picker has paraded up and down the sidewalk carrying on her back her picking basket decorated with a representation of the sun, an act which is believed to ripen the berries.

"Get ready to pick red elderberries [or whatever species is ripe] tomorrow," she keeps calling out.

The berries may then be picked by anyone. This is repeated for every variety. As far as could be learnt, there was no social mechanism to punish a woman who picked berries before the announcement of the official picker; obedience seems to have been so universal that infractions are said to have been unknown though formerly there may have been some penalty of which even the memory has disappeared.

THE PROFESSION OF WARRIOR

The profession of warrior is another prerogative handed down from the distant past and requiring validation before it can be used. As with other rights of this type, magical means are in many cases employed to make any young man brave and successful, but there are a number of warriors confirmed as such by the distribution of presents at the time of bestowal on them of professional names. At the present time, it is

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701 difficult to estimate the former influence of such warriors. The belief of all in their ability must have given them some prestige, although the requirements of practical qualifications in fighting must often have prevented them from functioning as military leaders. In other words, a man may be, socially, a warrior, even though he lacks ability as a fighting man.

701 693 [688] [575] [428] [411] [754] The functions of warriors are not limited to fighting with enemies of other tribes. Each has the power to kill and must exercise it when requested. If a mistake is made in a ceremonial *kusiut* dance, the offender must be killed, and one way in which this is accomplished is by the senior members of the society requesting a professional warrior to act as executioner. One of these men, who lived at *Ăsăn-ăn-i*, always used a stone club which had been handed down from generation to generation, becoming the property of each new incumbent of the name and prerogative. In other cases, the killing is said to have been done with the aid of magic. The power of the *Ăsăn-ăn-i* warrior had been confirmed with so much goods that he was the most powerful professional killer known to the Bella Coola. He acted on instructions from the senior members of the *kusiut* society or when called upon by anyone. If, [684] for example, a man found that his wife had been faithless and wished to kill her lover, it was only necessary to tell the professional warrior, who was bound to act in accordance with his prerogative. He received no pay, since he was merely [682] exercising his right. The relatives of the murdered person never took revenge on the slayer, realizing that he was powerless in the matter, though they frequently requested him to slay the person who had asked him to kill the first victim. He could never refuse to do so, even if the victim were his own brother, or if he knew that the person he was to kill was guiltless. The underlying principle was that this man's power had [761] been increased to such a pitch by the distribution of presents that if he failed to exercise it on demand, it would react upon himself and cause his own death. This *Ăsăn-ăn-i* warrior began in time to have an aversion for his vocation, since he

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534 754 one used by some of *Tsika*'s ancestors. It was brought to the ocean and thrown in.

Taboos

784 The Bella Coola regard as taboos those injunctions that are observed in the belief that their neglect would cause automatic punishment. The mechanism of enforcement is frequently not understood; it is enough to know that an unpleasant result would follow disobedience. Some taboos are in force at all times, others only during certain seasons of the year, and still others at critical periods of life. Since the psychology of such [789] beliefs is essentially magical rather than religious, they could justifiably be grouped at this point. Unfortunately, to do so would destroy the continuity of accounts of birth, adolescence, death, ceremonial chastity, and many other aspects of Bella Coola life subject to taboo. The injunctions enforced by the River Guardian, the restrictions observed by a girl after puberty, the continence required after different medicines, all are taboos, disregard of which brings certain punishment. These and many others have already been described in connection with the activities to which they pertain. It is doubtful whether the Bella Coola have a single word to describe taboos [783] in general, though they are all regarded as *snaiâx*, that is, as something which is ceremonially unclean.

Scarcely to be distinguished from taboos are ceremonial errors, *yun·imut* or *kân·imut*. Failure to give presents to heralds when a seat breaks beneath a chief or a dancer stumbles, or unnecessary activity during the year's waiting for the fruition of supernatural good fortune are ritual mistakes of this type. Neglect of such regulations brings punishment, though of a lesser kind than the breaking of taboos. If the [688] error has been in connection with a ceremony, the offence can [203] be wiped out by presents to heralds, and the terms *yun·imut* and *kân·imut* are likewise applied to some of their prerogatives such as the ability to claim clothing during the marriage of a chief's child.

Most taboos and errors can best be described with other

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untranslatable word with the significance of "One who has suffered loss through faulty concealment [of his repository]." Some of these vaults[1] are said to be dangerous to the uninitiated who avoid them and in this way the sanctity of some chiefs' meeting-places is guarded.

According to Kimsquit belief, *Ăno'likwolsaix* has a husband, *Ălmoqliaikila*, who dwells with her in every repository. If an uninitiated person should chance to find a vault, he falls dead before the power emanating from *Ăno'likwolsaix*. Her husband then restores the dead by blowing violently on the back of the victim's neck, accompanying this with cries of *hoip*. When a person is initiated into the *kusiut* society, the uninitiated hear the songs used, in many of which are references to the experiences of the novice with this supernatural pair.

Turning now to the manner in which the *kukusiut* regard their own society, it is evident that the most important duty of each member is to aid in impressing and deceiving the uninitiated. The prestige of the organization depends upon the ability of its members to inspire awe, hence any weakness in fulfilling this obligation is an anti-social act. For this purpose the society acts as a whole. Many *kukusiut* have, for example, Cannibal prerogatives, and on occasion the Cannibals, having the same functions, work together, but they do not form a separate organization of their own.[1] Many of the means employed to deceive and impress the uninitiated have already been described. Mythology records, and it appears to be a fact, that long ago the ascendancy of the *kukusiut* was often challenged by the *a'alk* and other uninitiated, but when the white man came the society had reached a position of such eminence that the powers of its members were unquestioned. Moreover, the combined strength of virtually all the seniors of the tribe was so great that an uninitiated person could not assert himself even if he was suspicious.

Although members of the society exert every effort to con-

[1] The Bella Coola state that such sub-societies are found among the Kwakiutl.

[1] [i.e. - a repository of supernatural power - ANALYST]

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ceal their subterfuges, it sometimes happens that an uninitiated person sees or hears something which he should not know. The simplest way to deal with this situation is to kill the observer. It is said that as late as 1900 a young man, impelled by curiosity, wandered up a valley into which he had been warned not to penetrate, and met a Cannibal whom he believed had vanished into the upper realms. Almost dumbfounded, he accepted the latter's invitation to sit down, and was slain by him. More often, and especially if the observer is the child of a *kusiut*, he is initiated into the ranks of the society. If this happens at any time of year except the actual ceremonial season, he cannot perform immediately, but he is taken to the secret meeting place of the village chiefs, and there the mysteries of the organization are explained to him. The uninitiated are told that the observer has had a shaman's experience. With the aid of the older *kukusiut* he then performs a dance and conjuring feat of the type already described (I, p. 564), and is secluded until the next autumn, meanwhile wearing the distinctive collar of a shaman. In the songs used on this occasion no mention is made of a wash-basin, so of course the lad only performs ceremonially. When winter comes he is formally initiated into the society.

It is somewhat difficult to understand and explain the sentiments which lead a young man to obey rigidly the dictates of the senior *kukusiut* in deceiving his former friends. If it becomes known that a youth has seen something which should have been concealed, the senior *kukusiut* of his village meet in their ceremonial spot and decide that he must be put through the shaman's rite. Some relative of the youth is always ready to provide the necessary *kusiut* prerogative; otherwise he would have to be killed. Two or three members are then sent to catch the young man. On some pretext they lure him into the woods and then carry him away, struggling in fear, to the holy of holies, the place which he had been told to avoid since he would die if he penetrated to it. Here he finds all the seniors of his village, seated with grave expressions on

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Not knowing where to go nor what to do, he hid himself on a small island within sight of the village whence he could see and hear the people seeking him. At times some of his *kukusiut* friends came close, calling his name; but not till he was driven to do so by hunger did he reveal his hiding-place. Then he answered the shouts of two men who at first pretended they were merely seeking him because of the worry his prolonged disappearance was causing his parents. Once the lad was within their grasp they carried him swiftly to the house of one of the chiefs, where he found himself seated among the most influential men of his village with the door barred behind him. The fear which any youth would feel in like circumstances was increased greatly by the awe with which he, as an uninitiated person, regarded the *kukusiut*, especially on this occasion when he knew that he had roused their anger.

"What did you hear?" asked one of the marshals. The lad was too terrified to lie, so he blurted out all the gossip he had overheard, including the news of the death of the Rivers Inlet Cannibal.

"You have heard too much, you must join us," continued his questioner.

The same man then asked one of his relatives whether he would "buy" the lad from them, that is, whether they would provide the necessary goods to have him initiated. It was understood that through his improper knowledge he had come under the jurisdiction of the *kukusiut* and that, unless made one of them, they would kill him. The lad was the protégé of his uncle who at the time was initiating him into the *tsaok* ceremonial, and who accordingly was most unwilling to have his nephew made a *kusiut*.

"Let him be a spy," said the uncle.

After much discussion this proposition was agreed to; the decision was facilitated by the fact that one of the lad's ancestors had been a spy. All night he was kept sitting in the centre of a group of elders who revealed to him the mysteries of the organization and showed him the whistles and other regalia. For twenty years this man remained a spy, dutifully informing upon any over-inquisitive, uninitiated person.

The informant was more than sixty years of age when he related this incident, but the passage of time had not caused him to forget the utter terror and feeling of inferiority experienced when he was taken into the presence of the senior *kukusiut*.

Although every *kusiut* assists in preserving the dignity and awe of the society, this duty is especially the function of those members who are regarded as the earthly representatives of

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*575 [424] [776] *Ano°likwolsaix*. They may be termed marshals of the society. Each must have an ancestral prerogative for this, duly validated by presents to the *kukusiut*, in addition to a *kusiut* prerogative of some kind. In each village there are four or five of these men. Whenever food is being served at a *kusiut* dance, the marshals receive theirs first and then one or other of them addresses the audience in slow and impressive style, beating on the floor with a stick to add emphasis to his words. He admonishes his fellows to safeguard the ancient rites of the society, to be bold, to be secretive, and he pays honour to the member who has given the dance. It is they who take the leading part if a youth is dragged away to the meeting-place for initiation, and it is they who arrange matters when a spy reports that a non-member is over-inquisitive. If any member of the society *575 688 should break one of its laws at a time when no uninitiated are present, the marshal is expected to seize a burning stick from the fire and strike the offender with it. If death should result, revenge is unthinkable, since the criminal had broken the law. The same fate is unhesitatingly meted out to any *kusiut* who should dare to betray any of the mysteries to the uninitiated. Moreover, it is the marshals who decide whether any improper act lowers the dignity of a dance, and punish accordingly. Not many years ago a *kusiut* woman gave birth to a child while a dance was taking place and the infant was slain by one of the marshals. The usual explanation made to the uninitiated for [761] a death within the dance-house is that a supernatural being caused the roof to fall and kill the victim.

*575 551 [424] [553] Each marshal has, in connection with his prerogative of this vocation, a professional name, used only within the house where a *kusiut* dance is taking place and carefully concealed from the uninitiated. Some designations were obtained from *Ano°likwolsaix* by an ancestor of the possessor, others were created on this earth with reference to some specific event, and duly made valid by presents to the *kukusiut* alone. Some of these names are:

Xwolxekmis, "The Destroyer," so given on account of an

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elaborate *kusiut* ritual which failed;

Namulsta, meaning unknown;

"The One who Guards the Ritual by Gripping with his Teeth";

"The Terrifier";

"The Dog-Toothed One."

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When a *kusiut* acts contrary to the interests of the society the marshals gather in the sacred meeting-place of the village, with other senior *kukusiut*. There is no definite order respecting who shall, or shall not, be summoned. The matter is discussed until unanimity of opinion is reached, although a marshal, particularly if he is also a rich and influential chief, is the guiding spirit. In *Nusqulxwaista* the supernatural being *Sikiliktnim* kills any supernatural *kusiut* who errs, so in this world it is always said that a verdict of death has been given by this being. Several of those at the meeting are sent out to lure the victim who, brought before the group, is told that he is to die. He is seized, thrown on his back, and a pole laid across his neck; two men sit on each end until the man is dead.[1] Sometimes less drastic punishments are meted out. About 1880, when the influence of the white man had become evident on the coast, a dancer who had been, theoretically, disembowelled and was supposed to remain for months within his house to recover from the operation, insisted on fleeing to Kimsquit to a woman with whom he was in love. When he returned to Bella Coola a meeting was held to decide whether or not he should be killed. Fear of the white men prevented summary punishment, but the marshals insisted that the offender submit himself to periodic scratching on the stomach with a nail so that it would appear to the uninitiated that he was suffering from a deep wound. The offender was thankful to escape thus lightly.

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[1] Occasionally the relative of a condemned person saves him by saying that he must not be killed. This means that the speaker is willing to die as a substitute; he is executed in due course, but the mechanism by which the diffusion of information is stopped is not clear.

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Frequently the marshals and associated *kukusiut* depute others to act as their executioners. Sometimes a shaman who is also a *kusiut* is asked to slay the offender, or a *kusiut* in whose ancestral family a knowledge of means for secret murder has been handed down for generations may be called upon. The executioner is told that if he fails he will himself be killed. Although no Bella Coola would admit that a person so charged had committed murder by other than magical means, it appears highly probable that such was the case. It is believed that long ago the *kukusiut* were able to kill an offending uninitiated person by drawing forth his spirit, wrapping it in undyed cedar-bark and casting it into the fire. The victim would die within a short time.

The desire to carry out *kusiut* ceremonials with proper dignity and ritual not only acts as a strong bond of union among members of the society in a single village, but between those in different towns and even in different tribes. When a marshal has struck a *kusiut*, the ceremony, whatever it may be, is at once stopped. Two *kukusiut* are sent off to bear the tidings to the nearest village up the valley, and two more to the one below. The messengers go beneath the house in which a dance is taking place and knock on the floor of the back-room. Someone presently hears them and a *kusiut* goes out to investigate. When the envoys have told their tale he returns, whispers to the singers, and the ceremony concludes for that night. As soon as the uninitiated, if any are present, have been ejected, the messengers enter with blankets almost covering their faces and seat themselves between the fire and the back-room where the senior members crowd around to listen. From this village two more *kukusiut* are despatched with the news which is thus transmitted with remarkable speed from end to end of the valley. When next the marshals are admonishing the *kukusiut* of their respective villages, they do not fail to draw attention to the way in which the law has been upheld. Conversely, if a marshal hears indirectly that there has been a flaw in the ritual of a neighbouring village,

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he beats in the fire with his stick, and expresses the hope that the name of the marshal in the town where the error took place may be blackened unless he does better.

As an individual *kusiut* who errs is punished by a marshal, so is punishment meted out to the members of a village in which any serious accident occurs during a dance. Such disasters are fire, causing concealed *kukusiut* to appear among the uninitiated, the breaking of a sidewalk on which a number of the members are dancing, or the capsizing of lashed canoes which are used in some of the performances. The obvious effect of such mishaps is to lower the prestige of the *kusiut* society in the eyes of the uninitiated. The news travels from town to town, and to adjacent tribes. This is a *casus belli* for any village which wishes to attack the one where the disaster took place; in fact, a raid is considered meritorious. Owing to frequent marriages between the members of neighbouring villages, it usually happens that the inhabitants of adjacent settlements are unwilling to attack, but the news spreads until it reaches a town willing to take the lead. The marshals, aided by any other influential *kukusiut*, discuss the matter and decide on war; uninitiated are called upon to take part, though they are told only that the foray is connected with the rites of the *kusiut* society which increases rather than decreases their awe. The threatened villagers, knowing that an attack is inevitable, send out sentinels and guards, and, if possible, flee at the last moment to neighbouring towns for safety, allowing the raiders to burn their village and carry off loot. If a fight takes place many people may be killed, but slaves are never taken. In the last century *Stuxˑ* attacked *Ałqälaxl*; the assailants were aided by a number of Chilkotin to whom they were related but who had not the slightest idea of the cause of the raid. Although an attacked town is usually helped by its neighbours, this is not the case when the assault is caused by error in *kusiut* or *ɬsaok* ceremonial.

Nor is punishment for error or disaster in ritual meted out

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*575 only by members of the same tribe. The Bella Coola firmly
648 believe that if, for example, there is a serious disaster at
688 *Q̇omqo·ts*, that village will be raided by the people of Bella
721 Bella, Fort Rupert, Kitkatla, or by tribes even farther away.
[628] News of the accident reaches *Täl·io* or Kimsquit and the inhabitants, themselves related by blood to the offenders and therefore unwilling to punish them, call upon the members of a foreign tribe to do so. On different occasions this statement, in practically identical terms, was made by six independent informants, so there appears to be not the slightest doubt as to the belief of the people in this law. But when specific cases were asked for, they could not be obtained. It therefore appears clear that the Bella Coola, probably owing to long teaching on the part of the *kukusiut*, consider that an error in ritual is sufficient to bring punishment from an alien tribe. There must be some basis of truth in this conviction, and it is highly probable that the *kukusiut* must have taken advantage of raids to explain to the uninitiated that these were caused by disasters in ritual. One informant was of the opinion that, following the collapse of a house at Kimsquit during a Cannibal dance, a Bella Coola chief called upon *Tcabsa*, chief of the Kitkatla, who raided Kimsquit in punishment. Quite apart from the belief inculcated in the uninitiated, it is obvious that tribes eager for war sometimes used an accident as pretext. The Bella Coola know of no case in which they raided a foreign tribe for this reason, although they state that if they had been called upon to act as punisher, they could not have refused.

*575 Leaving now the functions of the society as a whole, the
424 rights of an individual member can next be described. Each
425 *kusiut* has:
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(1) *A Kusiut Name.* Like every other prerogative, a name of this type can be acquired from father, uncle, grandfather, or other relative, or even by a son from his mother. As a rule a *kusiut* wills his designation or designations, for a man may
[556] have several, before death and his wishes are observed. Al-

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[Kusiut Society Initiation]

some ashes which he puts into his mouth and chews. Of course he masticates only the ashes but X, unaware of this, is concerned for the fate of his spirit. At last it is restored to him and he is told that the *siki* has altered it from that of an uninitiated person to that of a *kusiut*.[11] The psychological effect of this act on the mind of a young man who has not had time to adjust himself to his new knowledge and who is firmly convinced of the powers of the *siki* is tremendous.

The first *siki* now instructs two *kukusiut* sitting on either side of X to lie down to serve as a seat for him. They do so, irrespective of who they may be. If the novice is still ignorant of the full mysteries of the society, the *siki* announces that he is going to get a call for X. He walks around the house, peering here and there as if seeking something, and then pounces as if he had caught an object between his hands. A whistle is heard, such as the novice knows accompanies the coming of every call; but he does not know that the noise is made by compressing a goat or bear bladder-whistle between two sticks held beneath the armpit. This is the "mystery" of the strange noises.

"Do you know what makes that noise?" ask the two *kukusiut* on whom X is sitting.

If X denies all knowledge, the mystery is explained to him, and he is warned that he will be killed if he communicates the information to uninitiated persons. If he answers that he knows the cause, he is asked who has told him. Perhaps some lad has been peeking and has told X of what he has seen; in that case the over-inquisitive youth is at once initiated to prevent further leakage of information. As soon as X has learnt the great secret he moves to one side and the singers take their positions behind the fire. His father, or whoever it may be from whom he is to obtain his name, then stands up and unfolds its origin, telling which supernatural being is his patron, and the locality of his repository. X sometimes re-

[11] This part of the rite has been omitted for so many years that many of the middle-aged *kukusiut* have forgotten it.

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[Kusiut Society Initiation]

* 575 781 796 a woman about sixty years of age, vividly recalled her fears when she, a young woman, gave her first performance. It was the Dance of *Winwina* (II, p. 187), in which she had to call out loudly when a large number of uninitiated persons, including Carrier Indians, were present. One of the marshals was her great-uncle and he had carefully taught her what she was to say. A few minutes before the time for her announcement he came to where she lay hidden in an enclosure behind the fire:

"Do you see your relatives here?" he said. "Look at your father, your mother, and your uncles. If you fail to say what you are expected to say, they will all die in a few weeks, and so will you. Be bold!"

The woman asserted that it was the most terrifying experience in her whole life because, though she knew there was deception in the rites, she also knew the power of the society [688] and that the threat of death in case of error was no idle one. She was so frightened that she forgot the carefully learnt words and it required the prompting of the hidden marshal to get her through the ordeal.

But once the first rite has been successfully negotiated, it is a proud day for the novice. He feels himself a real *kusiut* and glories in his superiority over his former associates. For the rest of the season he, like everyone else who has performed a dance, must attend every rite. Energetic novices sometimes give their dances on two, or even three, successive years, though usually a man allows five or six to elapse between displays.

* 575 766 [533] If X should die during the year's interval between his initiation and his first dance, he is secretly buried by his fellow *kukusiut* without the customary mourning rites, and with no uninitiated persons present at the grave. His song, if one has been composed for him, is sung softly, and he is interred adorned with his collar of dyed cedar-bark. During the next ceremonial season, that at which he should have danced, it is necessary for a brother, or other near relative, to receive a call since it is felt that a dance once begun must be completed,

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attend every *kusiut* dance. Usually all *kukusiut* do so in any case, but the attendance of all novices and those who have had calls is obligatory. If the dancer's face has been blackened, it must be kept so during this period. At every *qotlim* he dances to his eight songs, and throughout the ceremonial season has the power of attracting to himself the spirit of an uninitiated person. He sleeps in whatever house a dance is taking place, but is forbidden to hold sexual intercourse except in his own, which, of course, is possible only when a call comes to another housemate. Failure to obey this injunction was formerly punished by the marshals with death. These rules apply to every dancer.

Ałquntäm enters *Nusqulxwaista* at the winter solstice, and at that time calls come to those *kukusiut* of whom he is patron. It is uncertain whether or not this entails the regular ceremony of four nights' duration. On the entry of the supreme being, *Noäkxnım* seizes his paddle (or pole?), returns to *Smaien·a*, and then descends the Bella Coola River. It is believed by the uninitiated that X can see him as he passes, and the singers compose a ninth song for him. The words describe how the departing *Noäkxnım* empties a large number of olachen into the river.[10] X dances to it, but no call comes to him. This final episode of the complicated ritual occurs, of course, after calls have come to other *kukusiut*.

It sometimes happens that no *kusiut* of whom *Noäkxnım* is patron has enough food to give the lengthy dance just described, but some type of ritual is necessary to inaugurate the ceremonial season. Accordingly, someone with the proper prerogative is asked by the marshals to see *Noäkxnım* when at the mouth of the river; then, when he passes upstream four days later, a call can come to any *kusiut*. This abbreviated ceremony, termed *Imältındjutqwlsan*, is carried out in the manner described above, except that it is completed in four days with only two songs.

[10] *Noäkxnım* is accordingly often called *Nuälulnım*.

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[The Dance of Wil·a]

*575 *796 houses. The night's ceremony concludes with a meal and the admonitions of the marshals.

No further description is needed of the rites taking place the next day, that of *nusiutälsap*, when a second song is composed, again dealing with X's patrons, and wood for masks is cut. The evening's ceremonial does not last as long as that of *lsxtämem*.

[532] [302] [575] The next day, *qothm*, the carpenters work at the masks, some of which must be finished by nightfall. Late in the evening both *kukusiut* and uninitiated prepare themselves by painting and washing; at this time the young men provide pans of warm water for their female friends. As already described, the *kukusiut* are the first to enter, followed by the uninitiated when all is ready. [184] In Kimsquit they see the masks of at least some of X's supernatural patrons suspended by cords of dyed cedar-bark from a sloping pole that stretches from the floor at the base of the back-room to the cross-beam behind the fire. It is said, although the informant could not guarantee the truth of the statement, that long ago masks had to be displayed at this dance, though it was optional at others. It is a serious and sacred time, one at which frivolity is quite out of place, and the marshals are in readiness to punish any [688] offender. One very old informant told of having seen a marshal strike down and kill a *kusiut* from another house for holding intercourse with a woman on this night. The heralds *[203] [537] stay near the door, repeating and enlarging on the remarks of the marshals; the fluency of these functionaries always adds appreciably to the success of any Bella Coola rite. On this occasion X and the dancer of *Noäkȳnm* must perform, followed by those who have danced in former years, according to the desire of the singers; later in the season, when many *kukusiut* have performed, the rite may continue almost till dawn, for all must dance. After the departure of the uninitiated the *kukusiut* eat leisurely, while a marshal addresses them, commenting on the ritual and, perhaps, asking a man

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[The Cannibal Dance]

among the Bella Bella, Fort Rupert, and Rivers Inlet people. Indeed, in Bella Coola a poor man may be the most dreaded Cannibal of all, if he has been able duly to validate and perform his right in this respect. Nor is the dance carried out with the same rigour in Bella Coola as among the tribes of the outer coast.

The ritual of different prerogatives varies to such an extent that several accounts must be given, in spite of the repetitions that this form of presentation entails. On account of the length of time necessary, a Cannibal dance usually begins early in the season. The following describes the manner in which *Kämätslaks* of Kimsquit, who can bite the living, carried out his rite; it was obtained from his brother, who is thoroughly conversant with the details. It will be convenient to refer to *Kämätslaks* as X, and to use the present tense throughout.

A meeting is held at which the marshals and others choose, in agreement with X and his relatives, a day suitable for him to commence his performance. Under normal circumstances it is on some *qotlum* that a marshal announces that he can hear X's call, and on the following evening, when the ritual has been completed, the uninitiated are startled to hear continuous whistling from the slopes of the mountains near the village. The instruments used are of the usual bladder type, but the long-drawn-out sound, termed *Aiiläxa*, is said to be the voice of the kindly supernatural woman, *Snitsmän·a*.[42]

[42] The sole function of this being seems to be the restoring to life of those who appear to have been killed in the performance of *kusiut* rites. The Bella Coola are uncertain whether or not she is identical with *Tlitäpliläx·a*. The noise which heralds her coming is produced by the whistles of four *kukusiut* who throughout the night range the forests and mountains within ear-shot of the village. By bending their heads up and down, they are able to increase the weirdness and apparent elusiveness of the sound. The four travel in single file; the leader blows, and when his breath is nearly exhausted he presses the hand of the second man, who starts whistling forthwith, while the original leader drops to the rear. As the second becomes weary, he signals in the same way to the third, and so on; in this way the whistling is continuous, and the uninitiated are convinced that it cannot be caused by mortals, even if such an idea should occur to them. If a non-member should meet the four, they would at once kill him or make him a prisoner, keeping him out of sight until he could be initiated into the society.

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[The Cannibal Dance]

The most feared of all Cannibals are those who have the unusual prerogative of eating corpses. At present (1922), there is only one man with this right, whereas at least seven can bite the living. His prerogative was recently obtained from the people of Rivers' Inlet, although the ritualistic devouring of corpses was well known to the Bella Coola in former days. All informants agreed, however, that the actual eating of a body was practically unknown.[1] Even when one was provided and the Cannibal dragged it from house to house, accompanied by an escort of *kukusiut*, though he sank his teeth into the flesh and pulled forth morsels of the carcass, he invariably disposed of them as soon as he was out of sight of the uninitiated, as in the case of the dog. Of course, blood and small pieces of flesh must have been swallowed inadvertently, but the rite was always essentially ritualistic, not real. More often, the "corpse" consisted of a wooden frame-work, shaped like a human body, and covered with the scraped skins of deer or dogs. The interior was filled with the flesh of an animal, and the whole buried in the graveyard until the meat had become foul. The uninitiated, from a distance, watched the exhuming of this object and concluded that it really was a long-buried body. Fear prevented them from making a close inspection, so that the defects of the imitation were not apparent. The frames were kept hidden from year to year; an inquisitive non-member who chanced to stumble upon one would have to be initiated or die.

On account of the long time that has elapsed since a complete corpse-eating Cannibal dance was carried out, it was found impossible to obtain a detailed account of the ritual. This deficiency is unimportant since all informants agreed that it closely resembled other Cannibal dances.

Like other Cannibals, one who has the prerogative of eating dead human flesh can perform as often as he desires, subject only to the approval of the marshals, who have no hesitation

[1] Apart from this ceremonial eating, no trace of cannibalism was found among the Bella Coola.

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[The Breaker Dance]

they do not like. No compensation can be claimed, on the theory that supernatural beings do not have to pay for any damage they may do. Although the property of some *kukusiut* is destroyed, the chief sufferers are the uninitiated; this serves to increase their fear and respect for the society with which such all-powerful beings are in league. After visiting every house in the village, the party returns to X's, where the masks are burnt, the call sent back, and the proceedings conclude in the usual manner.

A certain amount of information concerning the history of the Breaker dance was obtained from *Sxek*, the owner of the prerogative just described. He is a well-informed man, but the writer had no opportunity of comparing his beliefs with those of his associates, so the following must be regarded as unsubstantiated evidence. This man stated that the Breaker dance is the most important of all in Bella Bella, and that many Bella Coola prerogatives have been obtained from this source, although some of their first ancestors likewise enjoyed it. He further stated that the term, *noltcista*, by which the Bella Coola always designate a Breaker, is of Bella Bella origin, and that the ancient Bella Coola term was *dirtia*.[1] *Sxek* also told of an occasion when a number of Bella Bella, present on the *qotlim* night of a Bella Coola ceremony, were disturbed when eating by the thud of a stone thrown, from outside, against the wall of the back-room. Out rushed a number of *kukusiut*, incensed at the disrespect shown to their gathering. They caught the offender, but released him when he was found to be a Bella Bella Breaker, foolishly demonstrating his prowess. The marshals decided to retaliate and arranged with two Bella Coola Breakers to exercise their rights and destroy the canoes and food-boxes of their guests. They did so, and later paid for the damage. The Bella Coola were thus able to demon-

[1] *Sxek* and several of his children are the only Bella Coola known to the writer who habitually use the sound "r." For example, he says "*Snulori*," instead of "*Snuloli*." He says that he is himself unable to distinguish any peculiarity in his own pronunciation, although other Bella Coola are aware of it.

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[The Breaker Dance]

*575 *796 648 688 [721] strate their own superiority; they had paid those who had witnessed their prerogative, whereas the Bella Bella Breaker had merely cast a stone without solemnity. Speeches were made, and it was decided that henceforth instead of waging true war in case of an error in ritual, it would be sufficient if the Breakers exacted punishment by destroying property. That is the explanation offered by this man as to why foreign war-parties have not more frequently upheld the law by raiding. As before stated, the writer is uncertain whether such beliefs are generally held by the Bella Coola and of course the historical accuracy of the information is still more doubtful.

THE *Kusiotem* DANCES

*575 *796 424 [775] More awe-inspiring, though less terrifying, than the Cannibal, Scratch, and Breaker dances, are the *kusiotem* dances. In these the dancer undergoes mutilation and death, but his supernatural power enables him to return to life—at least so it appears to the credulous non-members. The five dances known as *kusiotem* are:

The Stomach-Cutting Dance;
The Beheading Dance;
The Drowning Dance;
The Burning Dance; and
The Swallowing of Hot Stones Dance.

Each of these comprises a distinct ceremonial of great complexity, but only one prerogative is required. That is, a man who has the *kusiotem* right may allow his stomach to be cut one year, and when he next performs will choose to display his ability to swallow hot stones. In this respect, it differs from all other *kusiut* ceremonies. Although a *kusiotem* dancer is entitled to exercise his privilege as often as he wishes, provided his marshals consent, the rite is so difficult that it is rarely carried out.

[773] As far as could be learnt, the Bella Coola of today have no

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[The Stomach-Cutting Dance]

* 575 * 796 dangerous. Unless he is restored to life before dawn we will slay you."

The other uninitiated marvel that any of their number should be bold enough to taunt the *kukusiut*, ignorant of the fact that those who do so are really spies whose part in the performance has long since been arranged by the marshals. [688] Instances are remembered when the wooden or copper frame was defective and the performer was killed; in such a case the spies actually slew one or more *kukusiut* to preserve the prestige of the society. Exact details were unobtainable, but it seems clear that the victims were selected with the aid of the marshals during the night; they were, of course, men of little importance in the community.

The spies prevent anyone from leaving the house and gradually the din subsides, except for the constant wailing of the women, particularly X's relatives. The *kukusiut*, granted a respite until dawn, allow some of the uninitiated to come forward and pass sunwise around the fire to see the corpse of X with the bloody entrails exposed. At this juncture, the old women selected for the purpose sing the mourning song, of which the words and tune never vary; they are believed to have been handed down from time immemorial. The theme is of *Snitsmän a*, a kindly supernatural woman[70] who restores to life *kukusiut* killed in the performance of their rites. The singer in the upper, eastern, rear corner of the house sings the following words:

* 575 * 796 533 539

Nunuxwḳsam·ixwakotsk'	*yao disiaiyākmidjutnu*	*siyalaqailaoalt*
Perhaps you[71] saw correctly[72]	hence you did so;[73]	it is too much
sawanutciyekeltsi		
that has been given to you.[74]		

[70] Some informants state that there are several of these beings.
[71] Referring to X.
[72] Each vertical line marks the limit of a word or word-cluster, emphasized in singing, and the translation of it.
[73] That is: "You performed your dance in accordance with what you saw."
[74] That is: "You have received power that is too great and too dangerous." The specific reference is to the knife.

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[The Stomach-Cutting Dance]

and must never gossip or mingle casually with the outsiders. 575* In addition to a band of dyed cedar-bark on his head he wears 796* one around his stomach.

A number of years ago, when the influence of the white man 575* had become strong enough to undermine the old ritual, a Bella 796* Coola *kusiotem* dancer, instead of remaining in seclusion after 688● the dance, ran away to Kimsquit where lived a young woman 177 with whom he was in love. In the old days this would have led to punishment by a third tribe. When the offender wished to return to Bella Coola he was afraid of the wrath of the marshals, but plucked up courage to come back after several months. The marshals seized him and scratched his stomach with a metal nail so that the uninitiated, seeing the wound, might be led to believe that the man had been severely cut. Periodically the scabs were pulled off to re-enflame the injury and make it appear that a deep gash was slowly healing. The offender, of course, could not protest, since he was a *kusiut* who had broken the law and was fortunate in escaping so lightly.

The Beheading Dance

Another of the dramatic dances which can be performed by 575* a *kusiotem* is that of having his head pulled off. Like the 796* Stomach-Cutting dance, it is the prerogative of a Kimsquit [424] man named *Onixwaltcua*. He carried out the rite a few years after he had performed the one just described. The main points of ritual being identical for all *kusiotem* dances, minor points already recorded can be omitted. As before, it will be convenient to term *Onixwaltcua* X, and to describe the dance in the present tense.

Early in the summer X informs one of the marshals of his desire to have his head pulled off the following winter. The one consulted discusses the matter with his fellows; in this case no objections were raised as *Onixwaltcua* had already performed a *kusiotem* dance and it was felt that he was reliable. As soon as permission is granted, the would-be dancer asks the best carpenters to meet him in a lonely place in the forest and [532]

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575 796 *kukusiut* send back X's call in the usual manner. Then, two by two, the masks are cast on to the fire and the ceremonial is over.

THE DANCE OF THE TALLY POSTS

773 777 753 As previously described, a tally post is erected in the land above for every Bella Coola at birth. As long as this memorial is upright and firm, the individual to whom it refers enjoys health and prosperity, but if it becomes crooked he falls ill. 424 The uninitiated believe that several *kukusiut* have the prerogative of climbing to the land above during the ceremonial season and straightening leaning tally posts. This is such a 178 useful ability that it must have exercised great influence on 164 the uninitiated in early days, but the rite has not been properly carried out since the smallpox epidemic in the last century. 115 The following account was obtained from two old men who remembered the manner in which a certain *Onikotl* of *Tsmotl* performed a year or two before "The Great Sickness." Neither of the informants was a *kusiut* at the time, but they were able to supplement their recollections of the dance with what they afterwards learnt when initiated, so the following account is probably accurate in outline though deficient in detail. It will be convenient to refer to the dancer as X, and describe the ceremony in the present tense. It was also performed at Kimsquit many years ago.

The rite resembles *kusiotem* dances in many respects. X must obtain the consent of the marshals during the preceding summer, and their permission is refused unless the prospective dancer is a man of proved discretion. If they agree, X asks a 283 number of *kukusiut* women to help him by making a very long and strong rope of nettle fibre. At intervals the work-women gather for the purpose in the back-room of X's house, taking 688 care that no uninitiated see what they are doing. Every effort is made to ensure that there is no flaw in the rope as a break would be a serious matter, punishable by death.

Near the winter solstice the marshals choose a suitable time

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[The Dance of the Tally Posts]

one is permitted to leave, and the uninitiated gaze in amazement as the seemingly endless rope continues to be drawn up through the roof, although the rattle itself can no longer be heard as if X had passed beyond earshot. They do not know that he has merely stepped from the ladder to the roof of the house, and thence to the ground, taking care to loop the cord over a projection so that he can continue drawing it out steadily. He has carefully practised rattling so that he can gradually lessen the intensity as if he were passing beyond ear-shot. One of the marshals describes the dangers to which X is exposed on his journey aloft, and calls on the *kukusiut* to sing his two songs to aid him. They are sung several times, but no others are used during the long night, nor are puppet-patrons employed as in *kusiotem* rites. The rope is being drawn from a large coil on the floor near the fire, and when the carpenters notice that it is nearly exhausted one of their number slips out to tell X to stop his climb. Presently, one or two yards of rope are quickly pulled through the hole in the roof and then all movement stops.

"He has jumped," cry the *kukusiut*.

A fluent *kusiut* explains to the uninitiated that the roof of the land above has opened before X's ever-lengthening ladder, that he has leapt from it to the ground above and tied his rope to something. On one occasion, a malicious rival cut the cable hoping that no one would notice the break, but luckily one of the watchful carpenters noticed it in time to knot the two ends. The *kukusiut* always explain that the rope is X's point of contact with the lower world, and that if it is severed, he cannot return. Accordingly, if the broken end had been drawn up through the roof, X could never have come back, and only his secret death would have served to maintain the reputation of the society.

The rope remains stationary for some time, and then is seen to be coming back through the aperture.

"X is returning," whisper the *kukusiut* to one another and the excitement becomes intense.

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the one that takes place at a thunder-storm, is said to "make good the path" of the patron. It would formerly have been a very serious offence for a Sun dancer not to perform at an eclipse; his failure would probably have been punished with death by the marshals. One informant vividly recalled his fears when he failed to perform at an eclipse soon after his conversion to Christianity, and reiterated that he had been in deadly peril from the marshals in spite of the white man's law.

THE MOON DANCE

The Sun is not the only heavenly body that acts as patron to *ẖuxiut* dancers, the Moon also has many human protégés. Among them is *Nulxwimăx*, "The Moon When It Is Unobscured," of *Tcmoxil*, from whom the following account of the Moon dance was obtained. As usual, he can be spoken of as X.

The Moon dance can take place at any time during the ceremonial season, subject, of course, to X's wishes and the consent of the marshals. The coming of the call is heralded in the usual manner and the *ẖuẖuxiut* presently assemble to learn the song just composed. It describes the following supernatural beings:

Asiutănem:[97] A woman who lives in the moon and who can be seen in certain of its phases, always carrying a bucket of water.

The two *Aiqwaiut*: These two beings are able periodically to blacken the Moon's face, thus causing an eclipse.

The two *Ixitsmăn-a*:[98] These kindly women clean the Moon's face after it has been blackened. It is these beings who come to earth to assist stricken *ẖuẖuxiut*.

The song also describes how no supernatural being dares to pass the Moon's house during an eclipse, a prohibition similar to that obeyed by uninitiated with regard to passing outside a house where a *ẖuxiut* ceremony is taking place.

[97] *Asiutănem* is the usual term for ghost; no reason was given for the application of the same designation to the woman living in the moon.

[98] There is difference of opinion among the Bella Coola as to whether or not there is more than one of these beings.

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tively that such is not the case among the Bella Coola. At the present time both drunkenness and vice are rampant, but neither of these practices is apparent on the nights when dances are taking place. The writer was present at many *kusiut* dances, in each case attended by practically every resident, and during them he saw only two drunken men. With regard to these, the sentiment of the influential members of the society was one of regret that the marshals could no longer exercise their prerogatives and punish the offenders. As several Bella Coola expressed it:

"Our dances are sacred and ceremonial, a drunken man spoils them."

As a rule they do not regard drunkenness as a serious vice, if a vice at all, hence this attitude was illuminating. It is more difficult to speak with certainty about morality; no breaches of it could have occurred at the ceremonies witnessed, nor was there any evidence that the excitement led to any licentious actions. On the whole, the dances are desirable since they provide a source of tremendous interest and importance. Vice flourishes with lassitude and boredom; anything that stimulates the people reduces it, and when the Bella Coola are engaged in ceremonial rites, the sentiment of the seniors of the community is strongly opposed to anything that interferes with the solemnity of the occasion.

There is no reason to suppose that these factors were not present in former times, more potent than now when belief in the supernatural powers of the *kukusiut* has passed away. The whole question of sexual morality at *kusiut* dances was investigated with considerable care.

One point emphasized by all Bella Coola was that no *kusiut* was allowed to have relations with an uninitiated person, whether his wife or not, during the period that his face was blackened and he was wearing a ceremonial collar. The reason for this prohibition seems to have been one not of morality, but of the necessity for preserving the dignity and secrecy of the *kusiut* society. An offender was punished by being struck

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by a marshal with a billet of firewood; such a blow was never repeated and might or might not cause death. The woman with whom the member had misdemeaned himself was either initiated at once or killed if her relatives could not provide a name and prerogative. 575* 796* 577 834 [688]

Restrictions between members of the society were less severe. Particularly during the long nights of *lsixtämem* and *nusiutälsep*, when only *kukusiut* were present and when men and women, often scantily clad, were closely associated, there seems to have been a certain amount of immorality. It was by no means a time of licence, nor was laxity encouraged by the marshals; intercourse between members of the society did not conflict with *kusiut* regulations, and was accordingly a matter that concerned the individuals alone.

Relations between the actual dancers and members of the other sex were formerly governed by strict rules, rigidly enforced by the marshals. After the coming of a call, a man could hold intercourse with a *kusiut*, provided that he did so in his own home, but in no other. But after *nebusam*, when he left his house, continence was demanded until the end of the season and the burning of the enclosure-platform. The only exception to this rule was that if a second dancer received a call in the same house, the restrictions placed on the first were raised while the call was actually upon the second; that is, between *lsixtämem* and *nebusam*. After that both were subject to strict continence, unless a third call came to the same dwelling. The Bella Coola of today offer no explanation for this law, save that disregard of it was displeasing to the supernatural beings. An offender in this case was likewise punished by being struck once by a marshal. [688]

The religious aspects of the dances, as exemplified by the attitude of the Bella Coola to the masked figures and other phenomena, was described in the early part of this chapter, but additional observations may now be made. The writer realises that the reader must find it difficult to understand how the uninitiated can be deluded into thinking that masked 575* 796* 781

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long ago the *kusiut* society was composed of individuals regarded as having supernatural endowments, and who perhaps believed this themselves. In course of time their influence increased to such an extent that they were able to convince non-members of the supernatural origin of objects used in their ceremonial.

Unfortunately, information from Kimsquit was obtained almost exclusively from one old man, who, though a marshal well informed in *kusiut* matters and in many ways an almost ideal informant, had long since realized that the dances could be nothing more than representations, and it is possible that his remarks were coloured by this knowledge. Though he tended to minimize the attitude of belief with which the uninitiated regarded masked figures, yet he fully agreed with every statement made by the Bella Coola themselves with regard to the firm belief of non-members concerning the supernatural powers of the dancers. He also confirmed statements respecting punishment if an error should occur, and mentioned the shooting of a Bella Bella dancer who had allowed his mask to fall during a *sisaok* dance. As far as actual ritual is concerned, the differences in procedure between Bella Coola and Kimsquit are unimportant, and differences in belief are less than they appear at first sight. The Bella Coola *kukusiut* seem to have perfected their organization and to have been able to impress the uninitiated to a greater extent than their Kimsquit fellows, but the fundamentals of the society are identical.

Traditions concerning the early history of the society are probably of little value historically, but they are important as indicating the mental attitude of the Bella Coola. Considering the importance of the society there are relatively few accounts of what took place long ago; the Bella Coola know that it exists, believe that the rites are identical with those carried out by their ancestors for generations, and theorize no further. It was only in the beginning of time that things were radically different; it is believed that then all the people were endowed

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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seldom a chief who had given many potlatches. Successful raiders rarely slew such an one; his position placed him above the dangers to which lesser men were subject.

Raids appear never to have been carried out solely for the purpose of giving warriors opportunities to display their prowess, or of permitting young men to prove their mettle. Scarcity of food was the commonest cause for forays when, of course, the victims were chosen for their accumulated supplies. The Kwakiutl especially, lacking abundance of salmon, often attacked the Bella Coola. Even more dreaded were the Kitkatla, the most warlike people of the central coast, who used to raid for many miles to carry off slaves whom they sold or traded for other commodities. Trespassing, too, was a source of friction which often led to hostility. In such a case, the offenders were usually held up to ridicule at potlatches, and the irritation gradually increased until wiped out in bloodshed. Members of a tribe which had suffered from a raid prompted by any of these motives would await a suitable opportunity for retaliation; this in turn would be avenged, and a vendetta often ensued lasting for generations. As already described, a ceremonial error brought punishment from a neighbouring tribe; this was the only motive which caused fighting between different Bella Coola villages. In the last century there was a struggle of this kind between the people of *Stuɯx* and *Ałqälaxl* in which the former were victorious and took many slaves who were later ransomed. When ill-luck had dogged a village or a group of villages for some time, the inhabitants sometimes endeavoured to wipe out their misfortunes by attacking another tribe.

The teeming salmon at Bella Coola, Kimsquit, and *Täl·io*, made it unnecessary for the Bella Coola to wage aggressive war for which they were unfitted both on account of their unmilitary attitude and their lack of central authority. On the other hand, they were tempting victims for more belligerent neighbours. The narrow Bella Coola valley, however, far removed from the open sea, and densely populated, was difficult to attack.

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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Carrier NE7

The other agreed, so they paddled in and landed at the bottom of the village, heedless of the fact that it was full of Carriers. The *Nusq̓alst* people seem to have remained passive, but the angry Carriers came rushing forth and *Oq̓mikumx̣* spoke proudly to them:

"You would be dead as your chief if we had not lost our weapons."

The two brothers walked slowly up the long sidewalk of the village, while the Carriers skulked around, uttering threats, casting stones and shooting arrows. Some of the latter stuck in their backs, but long previously both *Ts̓ā·kmai* and *Oq̓mikumx̣* had eaten part of a *sisiutl* which had rendered their bodies impervious to such wounds. Arrived at the upper end of the village, they stopped and waited, making no attempt to defend themselves, until they were killed. At intervals throughout the day the Carriers treated the two bodies with ignominy, now thrusting spears into them, now beating them, and all this time not a single Bella Coola dared even to protest, so much were they filled with fear of the Carriers who, when roused as they then were, fight like mad dogs. In the late afternoon one of the women thrust a knife into the eyes of the fallen warriors. Even this insult did not rouse the *Nusq̓alst* people themselves, but *Winäs*, one of their slaves, felt called upon to take action. Before being captured, he had been a person of importance in his own home and the Bella Coola had allowed him to become a leading member of the *kusiut* society; in the course of time he had become entirely reconciled to his fate, and even thought as a Bella Coola which gave him the necessary assurance to address the Carriers.

"*Wa*, wa," he said. "See the breadth of the sky.[13] I have never seen, nor have I even heard of such a thing as you have done today. Truly you have wiped your feet on all that is sacred and powerful."

This speech for the first time brought the enormity of their offence home to the Carriers. The actual taking of life did not affright them, but in their excitement they had overlooked what was to *Winäs* the most obvious sin: they had passed and repassed on the sidewalk outside a house where a *kusiut* dance was taking place. Thus reminded of the danger to which they had exposed themselves, the Carriers withdrew.

Next day the *Nusq̓alst* people buried the four victims. *Q̓āmālxem* had been a mighty chief and, being distantly related, they would normally have given him an elaborate funeral, but now they acted as if dazed and unaware of his prowess. A man who owned a powerful medicine put some of it in the eyes of the two who had been mutilated by the Carrier woman; as the bodies began to decompose, those who had killed them began to suffer from eye-trouble, and the woman became blind. Believing that their sin had caused their misfortunes, the Carriers fled home.

[13] To call attention in this way to the breadth of the universe carries with it the implication that it will fall to crush those who have broken a sacred law.

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6
Carrier NE7
Kwakiutl NE10
Bellabella NE5

B C 648 726 This account was obtained from a descendant of *Tsä·kmai* and *Oḳmikʉmɣ* who emphatically vouched for its accuracy. Some of the incidents have doubtless been exaggerated, but there is probably a basis of truth, though the passivity of the *Nusḳalst* people is difficult to explain. The killing is said to have taken place about seventy years before 1922, so tolerably accurate traditions of it are not impossible. No punishment was meted out to the *Nusḳalst kukusiut* since the ritual error, B [688] the passing of uninitiated outside the house where a ceremony was taking place, was committed by strangers, not by inhabitants of the town itself.

A WAR BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF BELLA BELLA AND RIVERS INLET

K Bb 721 648 B [721] [648] The tribes of the central coast, Bella Coola, Bella Bella, and Rivers Inlet, were frequently engaged with enemies to north or south, but there was seldom serious bloodshed between one another. The following account, however, describes a conflict between the Bella Bella and Rivers Inlet people in which the Bella Coola were not embroiled.

K Bb [186] [262] [556] Two favourite foods of the Rivers Inlet people are sockeye salmon which have become soft after spawning, and wild currants, eaten without grease. Their neighbours, the Bella Bella, consider both these articles of diet to be disgusting, although they are fond of raw mussels which the Rivers Inlet people regard as filthy. As already described, it was not uncommon at potlatches of the tribes of the outer coast for the hosts to hold up their guests to ridicule. On one occasion the Bella Bella did so with reference to what they considered the objectionable food of their guests. A masked dancer, representing a stranger, entered the house and the host enquired whence he came.

"Are you from Fort Rupert?" he asked.

"No."

"From Bella Bella?"

"No."

The dancer pointed to the south as if to indicate the next question.

"Are you from Rivers Inlet?"

"Yes."

"What do you eat there?"

Instead of answering verbally, the dancer drew from beneath his cape

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

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nixobäxta: Intangible *kusiut* prerogative consisting of the insertion of some object into the digestive tract. [424]

Nixpa: Expert supernatural dancer; to his associates he is a yearling mountain goat.

nmnlx or *nmnlxämut:* First complete dance given by a *kusiut* initiate.

mmnmk: Mammal, any kind. [825]

Nnixwanaix: One of the names of Great Blue Heron as chief.

Noakila: 1—One of the first men to settle on the upper Dean in the beginning of time.
2—One of the first men to settle at *Snuìali* in the beginning of time.

Noäkynm: Supernatural being who brings the salmon.

Noamtäxaik: Name given to his grandson by one of the first settlers at *Siskiut* in the beginning of time.

nolcista: *Kusiut* prerogative as a Breaker; this is said to be a Bella Bella term.

nolxäkta: Sloping stick extending from floor to roof behind the fire on which, at Kimsquit, *kusiut* masks are hung.

nomwak: The making and use of hand nets for olachen.

Nonodjonoitm: 1—"The Adviser": One of the names of the supreme god. [622]
2—Chiefs of a village, collectively; virtually, "The Sages."

no'onälim: 1—Ceremony at which *sisaok* names are validated in the eyes of the fellow-villagers. [553]
2—Any ceremony at which all kinds of dances are performed.

no'ondjut: Assemblage of the *kukusiut* to practise difficult rites. [796]

No·qwna, "The One with Thick Pubic Hair": *Tlaiyäkam* name given to a deserting wife.

Nowakila: One of the names of Raven as chief.

nowlxikaltam: Sentence of death passed by the *kukusiut* on one of their fellows as punishment for an error. [688]

nuaiyaa: A loan, especially of an ancestral right. [426]

Nuälulsmm: Synonym for *Noäkynm,* the supernatural being who brings the salmon.

Nu'aas, "Inhospitable": Name taken by a woman in consequence of slights received from her husband's relatives.

nuäpsulta: Toilet-hole.

nuaska: Birth. [821]

Nucälcäqos: Anthropomorphized evil cold wind. [769]

nudukʻan: Rhetorical term of respect for aged dead.

nudukʻan dy ilmsta: 1—High tide. [823]
2—Long life.

nudjiqasta: Cross-piece tied to canoe to hold olachen-net post steady while being driven.

Nu'exmäq, "Place of Foul Water": Village in the lower Bella Coola valley.

Nukʷ: 1—Village at head of South Bentinck Arm, on the east side.
2—River flowing into head of South Bentinck Arm from the east.

Nuxkmälsaia: Synonym for *Sximsximlt,* an immoral supernatural woman.

nuqäl: The achievement of success against supernatural odds; the term is used with reference to the solutions of the riddles of the Mystery dance.

nuktamlsnäxnam: Any non-sacred dance held at the conclusion of the *kusiut* season. [535]

Nukwaas: An influential Kwakiutl chief.

6:Boas E-5 (1886-ca. 1890)1892
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out by the strong breeze blowing in the higher regions. He is quite naked, and bites everyone whom he can lay hold of. If he cannot catch anyone he will bite his own arm. It is believed that he has lost his soul, which fled from the body when the spirit came to him. Therefore the shamans must try for four days to recapture his soul. The night after they have recovered it the Elaqō'tla dances clothed in a bear-skin and wearing a large headring, heavy bracelets and anklets, all made of red and white cedar-bark. Some Elaqō'tla do not bite people, but merely devour raw salmon, or tear dogs to pieces and devour them. Those who bite people will also eat corpses. The Elaqō'tla has to observe a number of regulations. For four years after his initiation he must not gamble. He must stay away from his wife for one year, but this period is being reduced to one month. For two or three months he must not leave his house.

The Ō'lEq (= the laugher) and the Dā'tia (= the thrower) do not go into the woods to be initiated, but both must fast three days before their first dance. The Ō'lEq 'makes fun of everything' and scratches people with his nails. The Dā'tia carries stones and sticks, and breaks household goods and canoes. If he has destroyed some object during the day he pays for it at night when he dances. The Ō'lEq and the Dā'tia must stay for one month, after they have danced, in their houses.

If a person transgresses the laws of the Kū'siūt, for instance when the Elaqō'tla gambles, or when a man performs a dance to which he has no right, also when a person derides the ceremonies or makes a mistake in dancing, his punishment is death. The chiefs assemble in council and the offender is called before the court. After his offence has been proved he is asked whether he is willing to suffer the penalty of death. If he is not willing, and one of his relatives is found willing to take the penalty on himself, the guilty party is spared, and the substitute is killed in his stead. The execution of the judgment is entrusted to the shaman, who bewitches the condemned person by throwing disease into him, or by poisoning him in some other (supernatural?) way. The object thrown by the shaman is a shell, bone, or finger-nail, around the middle of which objects a human hair is tied. If this object strikes the offender he will fall sick. Blood collects in his stomach, and if it so happens that he vomits this blood, and with it the disease-producing object, he will recover, and is not molested any further. The masks (not the whistles and other ornaments) used in the Kū'siūt are burnt immediately at the close of each dancing season. Novices must wear a necklet of red cedar-bark over their blankets for a whole year. The masks used in the dances represent mythical personages, and the dances are pantomimic representations of myths. Among others the thunder-bird and his servant Atlqulā'tenum, who wears a mask with red and blue stripes over the whole face from the right-hand upper side to the left-hand lower side, and a staff with red and blue spiral lines, appear in the dances. Prominent masks are also Qē'mtsiea and his brothers and his sister (see p. 412), Masmasalā'niq and his fellows, the raven and the Nusqē'mts, and many others.

Customs regarding Birth, Puberty, Marriage, and Death.

When the time of delivery approaches, the woman leaves the house and resorts to a small hut built for the purpose. She is assisted by pro-

8:Boas E-5 (1886-ca. 1890)1897
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

575 to him and takes him up to the sun, where he is initiated. Early one
[785] morning he returns, and is heard outside the houses. He has lost all
[787] his hair, which, it is believed, has been torn out by the strong breeze
[152] blowing in the higher regions. He is quite naked, and bites everyone
whom he can lay hold of. If he can not catch anyone he will bite his
[774] own arm. It is believed that he has lost his soul, which fled from the
[756] body when the spirit came to him. Therefore the shamans must try
for four days to recapture his soul. The night after they have recov-
[292] ered it the Elaxō'la dances, clothed in a bearskin and wearing a large
[301] head ring, heavy bracelets and anklets, all made of red cedar bark.
Sometimes he appears wearing the mask of the S'ā'lpsta (fig. 200),
the spirit which initiated him. This mask corresponds exactly to that
[532] of BaxbakuālanuXsi'wasē of the Kwakiutl. Some Elaxō'la do not
[171] bite people, but merely devour raw salmon or tear dogs to pieces and
devour them. Those who bite people will also devour corpses. The
[266] Elaxō'la has to observe a number of regulations. For four years after his
[525] initiation he must not
[834] gamble. He must stay away from his wife for one year, but this period is being reduced to one month. For two or three months he must not leave his house.

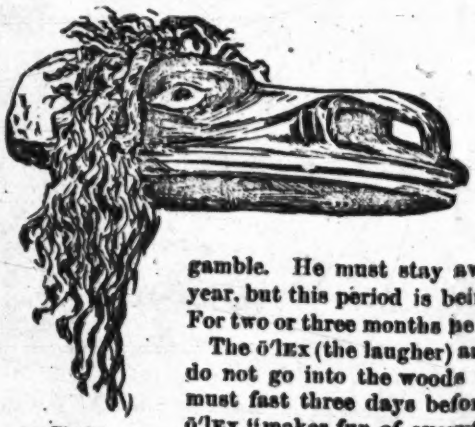

Fig. 200.
MASK OF THE S'Ā'LPSTA. Bi'ixula.
Cat. No. 77008, U. S. N. M. Collected by F. Boas.

The ō'lEx (the laugher) and the dā'tia (the thrower) do not go into the woods to be initiated, but both must fast three days before their first dance. The ō'lEx "makes fun of everything" and scratches people with his nails. The dā'tia carries stones and sticks and breaks household goods and canoes. If he has destroyed some object during the day, he pays for it at night when he dances. The ō'lEx and the dā'tia, after they have danced, must stay in their houses for one month.

575 If a person transgresses the laws of the kū'siut, for instance, when
● 688 the Elaxō'la gambles, or when a man performs a dance to which he
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[692] mistake in dancing, his punishment is death. The chiefs assemble in
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575 of death. If he is not willing and one of his relatives is found willing
688 to take the penalty on himself, the guilty party is spared and the sub-
754 stitute killed in his stead. The execution of the judgment is intrusted
756 to the shaman, who bewitches the condemned person by throwing dis-
ease into him or by poisoning him in some other (supernatural?) way.
The object thrown by the shaman is a shell, bone, or finger nail, around

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the middle of which objects a human hair is tied. If this object strikes the offender, he will fall sick. Blood is believed to collect in his stomach, and if it so happens that he vomits this blood, and with it the disease-producing object, he will recover, and is not molested any further. The masks (not the whistles and other ornaments) used in the kū'siut are burnt immediately at the close of each dancing season. Novices must wear a necklace of red cedar bark over their blankets for a whole year. The masks used in the dances represent mythical personages, and the dances are pantomimic representations of myths. Among others, the thunder bird and his servant, ALXNLĀ'TĒNUM (who wears a mask with red and blue stripes over the whole face from the right-hand upper side to the left-hand lower side, and carries a staff with red and blue spiral lines), appear in the dances. Prominent masks are also Xē'mtsioa and his brothers and his sisters; Masmasalā'nix and his fellows, the raven and the nusxē'mta, and many others.[1]

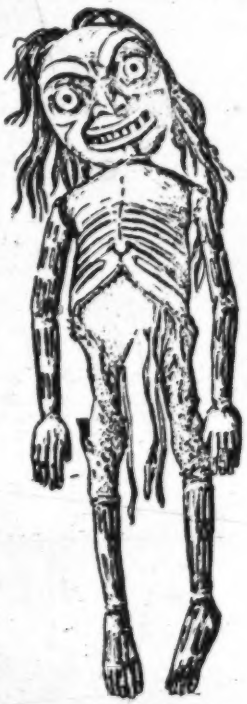

Fig. 201.

HEADDRESS OF ÓLALA'.

Haida.

Cat. No. 69928, U. S. N. M. Collected by J. G. Swan.

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THE TSIMSHIAN, NĪSQA', HAIDA, AND TLINGIT.

The tribes of this group learned the ceremonial avowedly from the Hē'iltsuq. Although I have not witnessed any part of their ceremonials, the descriptions which I received bring out with sufficient clearness its similarities to the winter ceremonial of the Kwakiutl. The ceremonials seem to be almost identical among all these tribes. It is most complete among the southwestern Tsimshian tribes, particularly the G-ITXĀ'LA, but has been adopted by all the tribes of the coast. It is said that it reached the Haida not more than a hundred years ago.

I will tell here what I learned from the Nisqa'. They have six societies, which rank in the following order: The SEMHALAI'T, MĒILA', LŌLE'M, ÓLALA', NANĒSTĀ'T, HŌNANA'L, the last being the highest. The SEMHALAI'T is really not confined to the winter ceremonial, but is obtained when a person acquires the first guardian spirit of his clan and performs the ceremony belonging to this event. The tradition of the origin of these ceremonies localizes the events at Bellabella, and it

[1] See "Indianische Sagen von der Nord-Pacifischen Küste Amerikas," page 241, by F. Boas.